***TWELFTH NIGHT*  THE COURT JESTER, CLOWN, FOOL**

In medieval days, when the community of the castle or hall was largely dependent on itself for its entertainment, the fool was an essential part of the great household. The history of his evolution is a fascinating one.. At first he seems a sad little figure, exaggerated by his loud clothing.. Mental and physical abnormality in themselves were entertaining to our ancestors, and the first fools were probably the objects of cruel mirth and derision.

BUT GRADUALLY THIS SITUATION CHANGED. THE COURT FOOL BECAME A MOST PRIVELEGED PERSON, AND HAD EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF EXERCISING THE MALICIOUS WIT AND CLEVERNESS THAT VERY OFTEN ACCOMPANIES DEFORMITY OF PERSON..

BY THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, FOOLING HAS BECOME A PROFESSION. THOSE WHO UNDERTOOK IT WERE BY NO MEANS DEFICIENT IN NORMAL WIT, NOR NECESSARILY HAD THEY ANY PHYSICAL DEFORMITY, THOUGH A COMICAL FACE , SHAPE, OR GESTURE WAS AN ASSET.

TO IMPROVISE A SONG, TWIST LOGIC, MAKE ALLUSIONS AND POINTED COMMENTS – ALL THESE WERE PART OF THE REGULAR JOB OF THE FOOL. HIS TASK NEEDED TACT AND DISCRETION

FESTE IS A CLEVER FOOL.